

VZCZCXRO4671  
OO RUEHPT  
DE RUEHBY #0055/01 0220350  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 220350Z JAN 10  
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2555  
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2175  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 1328  
RUEHRK/AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK 0201  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3806  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0226  
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE 6922  
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 5189  
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 5198  
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CANBERRA 000055

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR OES/OA BALTON, PHELPS, EAP/FO REED, COMMERCE  
FOR NOAA MEDINA, DEMASTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/23/2020

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EFIS](#) [PREL](#) [AS](#)

SUBJECT: WHALING: AUSTRALIA TO STICK WITH NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A. CANBERRA 28

[1](#)B. 09 CANBERRA 1099

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Edgard Kagan, Reasons 1.4(b)(d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Australian negotiators will continue to work towards a deal in the IWC on whaling. Despite aggressive rhetoric by the Japanese, the GOA wants to keep its cool and reach a consensus on a package before the IWC meetings in June. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Special Envoy Sandy Hollway see recent Japanese actions as logical - if frustrating - strategies in a tough negotiation. Department of Environment, Water Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) officials do not see current situation as a good indicator of progress. PM Rudd and a select group of Ministers are planning to meet on January 23 to discuss policy on whaling. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Econoff met with Paula Watt, Director of the Marine Environment Section at DFAT, on January 21. Watt, who was part of the group briefed by U.S. Commissioner Medina on January 20, said the full Cabinet did not discuss whaling as planned, but that PM Rudd and a small group of Ministers (likely including Ministers Smith and Garrett) would discuss the issue on January 23 before the negotiating team heads to Honolulu for the next round of talks.

GOA KEEPING ITS COOL  
-----

[1](#)3. (C/NF) Watt said that DEWHA was "shaken" by recent moves in Japan, Iceland and Norway that are out of step with the consensus agreed to in Santiago last year. At the same time, DFAT and Hollway have been tasked to negotiate an agreement by the next IWC meetings. Watt is confident that the engagement strategy is supported at the top. Watt confided that recent actions, including Japan's effort to slow the scientific assessment group process -- by submitting a "trial paper" that argued for a very high level of sustainable kills, are tough tactics that they would expect Japan to use in this kind of negotiation.

WITH NUMBERS, A DEAL MORE LIKELY?  
-----

[1](#)4. (C/NF) For a deal to be acceptable in Australia, Watt said it would have to include at a minimum a significant number of whales -- she suggested 5,000 -- saved over a ten-year

period, the removal of Fins and Humpbacks from the schedule, and no loopholes allowing scientific permits to be issued under the IWC beyond the limits set in the schedule. The number believed to be on the table in Tokyo of around 400 Minke whales per year for the Southern Ocean would be "significantly less" than the number actually killed, which Watt suggested would be a crucial selling point. DEWHA's Peter Commenar told Econoff January 21 that the range of proposed Japanese numbers would be very tough for Australians to accept and that recent steps by Japan, Iceland and Norway were an attempt to "wear down" the anti-whaling nations so that they will accept a poor deal.

15. (SBU) Watt, Hollway, and DFAT Assistant Secretary for International Legal Affairs Greg French will travel to Honolulu on February 24. In a separate discussion with Pol/Econ Counselor, French said the fact that he is going signals that DFAT believes progress is possible and someone with his legal background could be needed. His previous experience with the issue will further strengthen the negotiating team.

WATER OFF A WHALE'S BACK  
-----

16. (C/NF) Watt said that Japanese Diet Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Muneo Suzuki's suggestion that Japan use the proposed Australia-Japan Access and Cross Servicing Agreement as leverage to protect Japanese whaling, though not helpful, was unlikely to provoke an Australian response. The GOA senior leadership's goal is to remain cool, keep the issue

CANBERRA 00000055 002 OF 002

contained within the bilateral relationship, and continue to work toward a resolution. Regardless, the Opposition under Tony Abbott will attack Rudd of mishandling Australia's key relationships over issues like whaling in the upcoming election campaign.

17. (C/NF) Comment: The recent dust-up over numbers, tactics, and possible escalation by whaling nations outside of the ongoing negotiations appears to have strengthened the GOA's focus on negotiating a deal. Australian leadership has not commented on possible legal action since the news cycle around the early January collision between whalers and a Sea Shepherd vessel. Environment Minister Garrett, after presenting the GOA's initial response to the collision, has not spoken in public on whaling. Watt's comments indicate that, after overcoming some objections within their ranks, Australian negotiators could get PM Rudd's support for a deal with the right conditions. End Summary.

BLEICH